Jackie Vs. the Admirals

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Washington—Jacqueline Kennedy has left a lot of U. S. admirals with red faces because she doesn't want them on the platform with members of the family when the aircraft carrier USS John F. Kennedy is christened next Saturday at Newport News, Va.

If her wishes are carried out, it may be the first time a U. S. Navy ship is launched with uniformed dignitaries conspicuously absent.

The Navy's top brass have tried to keep their quandary quiet in the hope that Mrs. Kennedy can still be persuaded that her late husband would have wanted his old branch of the service well represented.

No reason was given for the unusual request she made last week. In agreeing to be present with her children for what will be an almost unanimous turnout of the Kennedy clan, she specified only that military be excluded from the immediate vicinity of the ceremony.

President Johnson will be present. So will Defense Secretary McNamara and others in the Pentagon hierarchy who wear mufti.

Mrs. Kennedy delayed her acceptance of the Navy's invitation to the launching for months.

It was she, reportedly, who wanted her daughter Caroline to be the sponsor who would smash the traditional bottle of champagne across the carrier's bow. Mrs. Kennedy will act as her daughter's matron of honor and hold her flowers.

It is customary for the sponsor to receive a gift. But fathers among those planning such details remembered that John Jr. would be there, too. Knowing he is too young to understand why his big sister got a present and he didn't, the daddies are chipping in to buy him a keepsake, too.

Admirals Will Be There

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Defense Secretary Robert McNamara will personally see to it that there are at least two admirals on the platform when the new aircraft carrier John F. Kennedy is christened this weekend.

Invitations are being extended to Chief of Naval Operations David L. McDonald and Atlantic Fleet Commander Thomas H. Moorer to join members of the Kennedy family in a party of 30 VIPS who will be prominently on view in places of honor during the launching.

McNamara's action is expected to quiet a minor Pentagon flap that erupted last week because disgruntled Navy brass complained privately that uniformed military personnel were being kept in the background at the specific request of Mrs. John F. Kennedy.

The Defense Department issued an official denial yesterday after details of dissatisfaction among top Navy men were published in The Washington Post on Sunday.

The statement from McNamara's office